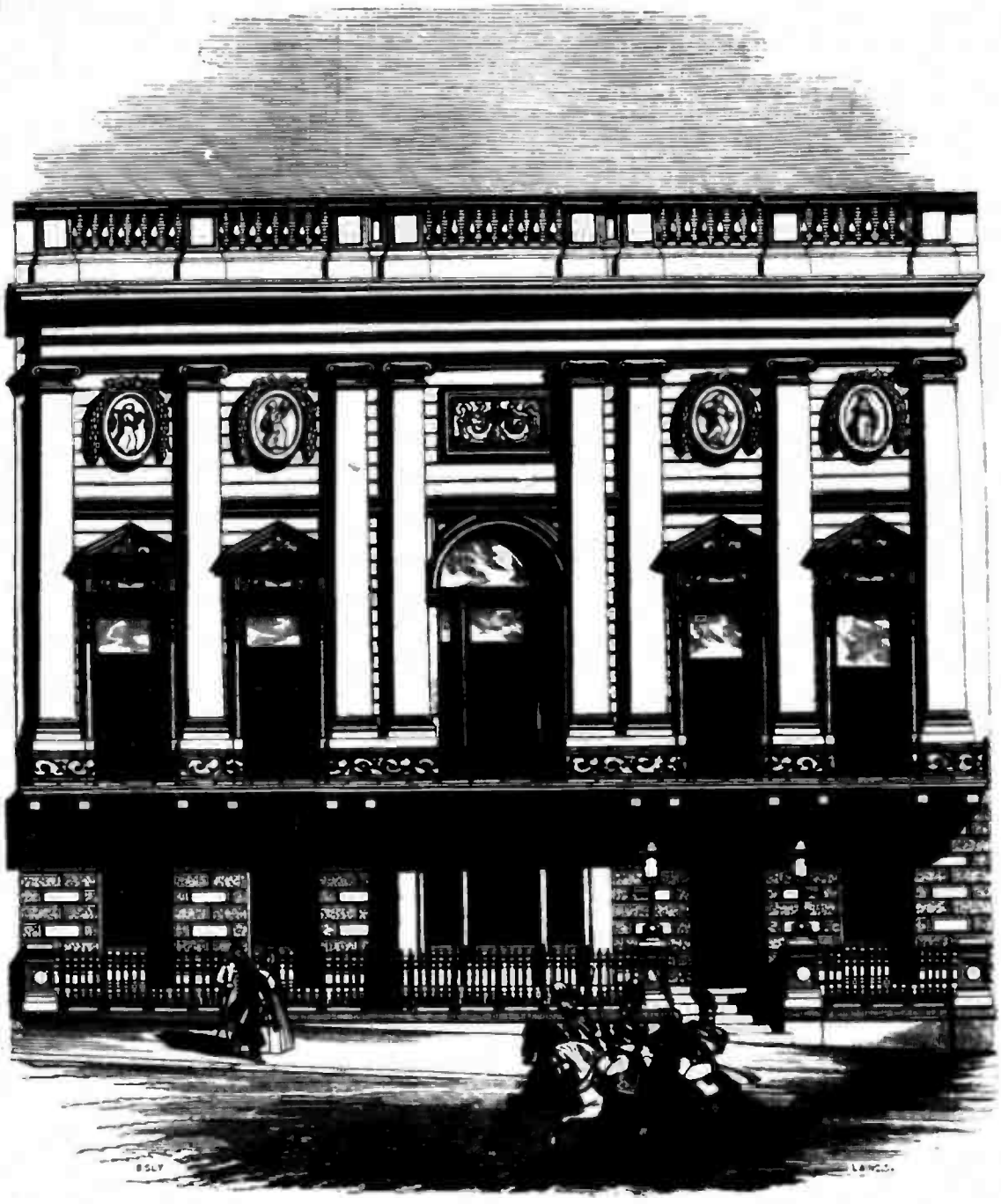

WHITE'S CLUB-HOUSE, ST. JAMES'S-STREET, AS ALTERED*

Mr. LOCKYER, Architect.

LONDON BRIDGES.

Old London-bridge was the only bridge across the Thames in London for a period extending to nearly six centuries, being commenced about the year 1176, under the superintendence of Peter of Colechurch. Westminster, which was the next, was commenced in 1739.

After the opening of Westminster-bridge, an Act of Parliament was obtained to remove the houses (which were of wood, and frequently taking fire), erected upon London-bridge, and which was also widened and improved; nevertheless, it was perpetually requiring repairs. Still, from the attachment and antiquarian veneration which old eventful associations had created, it remained till 1831, and now there is scarcely a landmark left by which the position where it stood is indicated. The present structure was commenced under the late Mr. Rennie, assisted by Sir J. Rennie, in 1824, and opened in 1831, with great pomp and ceremony, by the late King William IV.

As to Southwark, Blackfriars, and Waterloo bridges;—the first, a fine structure of cast-iron, was also erected under Mr. Rennie,—commenced in 1815, was opened in 1819. The second, of Portland-stone, was begun in 1760 and finished about 1770, under Mr. Mylne; and the third, a noble structure of Cornish granite, was commenced under Rennie in 1811, and finished in 1817. This bridge affords as fine a promenade of the kind as can be had in the heart of London; the pedestrian is able to walk free from the inconveniences attending thronged thoroughfares, and enjoy the fine perspective view of London, which, by the sharp turn of river, here meets the eye.

The noble river front of Somerset-house is close by the bridge: the dome of St. Paul's does not appear so vast as from Blackfriars-bridge, but the distance, which somewhat diminishes the idea of the size, "lends enchantment to the view." It is pleasant, on the close of a sultry day, to escape to Waterloo-bridge from the heated pavement of Fleet-street and the Strand: it is then that the nervous or impatient man, panting for a breath of air, and who fancies that the very noise of the streets aggravates all his uncomfortable sensations, will doubly enjoy the breeze that ripples the surface of the river, and likewise in marking how the setting sun touches both dome, tower, and pinnacle with its varied hues. Here, too, will be felt in the calm of a summer morning the force of Wordsworth's exquisite lines:—

> "Earth has not any thing to show more fair:
> Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
> A sight so touching in its majesty:
> This city now doth like a garment wear
> The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
> Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
> Open unto the fields and to the sky."

G. J. R.

* See p. 241.

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